

SOCIETY OF THE SICILY MAFIA.

Curious Workings of the Murderous Gangs.

ORIGINALLY ALL RIGHT

BUT THAT WAS FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

See Growth in Louisiana Shows How Easily a Weed of Foreign Origin Can Take Root in This Fertile Soil and How Noxious a Plant It May Become.

Some 500 years ago in the dark days of the Middle Ages a society by some called La Mafia was organized by the reputable people of the Island of Sicily. It was a crude form of the vigilance committees which maintained order in the early mining days of the west. When civilization was in its infancy La Mafia vigorously enforced the common laws of humanity. With civilization perfected to its present end-of-the-century degree La Mafia is a wonderful organization for the assassination.

The country districts about New Orleans have just been treated to some typical samples of the Mafia's work. Twelve men, women and children were mysteriously yet boldly shot down. The murderers have not been caught and probably never will be. The Mafia takes good care of its own. New Orleans has long suffered from the yoke of the Mafia. But since March 14, 1891, when its citizens broke down the gates of the Parish prison and shot to death a dozen vile wretches, the scum of Calabria and Sicily, the Mafia has not attempted to carry on its trade, except among its own people. It has left the American citizen severely alone. The Mafia, when its members riddled with bullets David C. Hennessy, superintendent of New Orleans police, on October 15, 1890, saw that its work against an American would be a failure. The murder was too costly. A dozen lives for one, was more than the ranks of the Mafia could stand.

In view of the operations of the Mafia in Louisiana it becomes interesting to study the society on its native soil in Sicily. A comparison shows that Louisiana is almost as much a sufferer as Southern Italy. The reason is this. Of late years a large percentage of the criminals discharged from the prisons of Southern Italy have emigrated to the southern states, fully 90 per cent. of them settling in Louisiana. The climate there suits them and the great Italian population of the place makes them feel at home. The Italian authorities do nothing to stem this current of scum to the shores of America. In fact Italy is glad to get rid of its criminals and aid them to come here. They are posted about the questions which will be put to them by the immigration authorities here, and easily conceal the information which would prohibit their landing. Louisiana has members of the Mafia and of the Camorra, a kindred society, which originated in Naples. The Camorra is not as deadly as the Mafia. Its members being given more to plunder than murder.

Death Its Only Penalty.
In Sicily the Mafia today knows no degree of punishment for offenses against its members. Death is the

only penalty. A man who has injured one of the Mafia's had his head cut off; one who overheard secrets of the society had his ears cut off; one who had seen too much had the skin of his forehead flayed and turned down over his eyes. They were all killed first. The mutilations were done after death, merely as intimations to friends of the victims, of the offenses which had been committed. The police of New Orleans and New York which have had extensive dealings with the Mafia have wondered at the extraordinary reticence of the friends and even of the family of a victim. Although they know the murderers, the police are never given the information. The family of the victim do everything in their power to defeat the law in its hunt for the murderer.

There are many reasons for this. Since the annexation of Sicily by Italy a revolt against the law and government has been part of the



A SICILIAN TYPE.

Sicilian nature. Law, and its enforcers, are dreaded things to the ignorant Sicilian mind. No faith is placed in them. Some phases of Italian law particularly the cruelties and tortures of the Italian prisons of years ago gave a solid foundation for this belief.

The Mafia's Morality.
Another thing which defeats the work of the police is the accepted morality of the Mafia which is covered by the word "omertà." A liberal translation of omertà is: "The first duty of a man is that of doing justice with his own hands for all injuries received, and stamps with infamy and holds up to public execration and vengeance whoever has recourse to the law."

On this account even the honest people consider it a good work to hide an assassin from justice and refuse evidence against him. Those who had the temerity to aid the police in the slightest way would bring down the speedy vengeance of the society upon their heads.

An Italian writer, skilled in the lore of the Mafia, describes it as "a union of persons of every class, of every profession, of every description, who, without having any regular and continuous tie are always agreed in promoting their mutual interests without any consideration of law, justice or public order. It is the medieval sentiment of one who considers himself able to provide for the protection and safety of himself and his interests by his own powers, and personal influence without regard to the authorities or the laws."

Its Work in the Cities.
In the cities the Mafia is so conducted that its members can live well without working. It has developed blackmailing almost to the degree of an art. It draws a profit from every trade in which a Sicilian is interested.

At an auction sale even the intending purchaser is informed by a significant looking man that some one else wants the property, but if he will pay a certain price in the interest of "the poor" he can have it. He must buy off the Mafia. In elections the candidate of the Mafia is quite sure to win. His supporters "advise" people not to vote against him. Public work contracts are watched and the contractor pays the Mafia for not interfering. The law is so ineffective against the operations of the society that the people dare not trust themselves to its protection, but suffer in silence, no matter how heavy the burden may be that is thrust upon them.

Should a Mafia member commit a murder, and be arrested it is the duty of the society to prove an alibi, bribe the jury or overawe it into finding a favorable verdict. A witness who testifies against the criminal suffers the loss of his cattle which are killed or his house is burned. If he be a tradesman he is boycotted and if this is deemed insufficient he is assassinated. The terror and power of the Mafia is thus upheld.

The Mannengotti.

In the cities a large percentage of the members constitute the Mannengotti. These hide and feed the criminal and see him safely through if he be caught. They examine the jury list and decide who must be called or rejected. The jurors selected are significantly informed that the prisoner is innocent. Witnesses are told that if they testify against the prisoner they will have to answer to the Mafia. Few men are bold enough to express an honest opinion in the face of these threats. There are cases on record where honest jurors and witnesses have been shot down in the streets in broad daylight a few hours after the close of the trial. The vengeance of the Mafia is swift.

In the country districts the mafioso is the chief director of the Mafia. He is apparently a prosperous tradesman or merchant in the small town. He never takes part in the actual crimes, but watches for the opportunity and gives necessary information. He receives the booty and sells it. Italian law regards him as the worst criminal in the society.

The Society of Long Ago.

Hundreds of years ago the Mafia was composed of a few men of the people. During its slow transition from a humane to an inhuman society the bulk of these men deserted its ranks giving the lower classes a stronger hold upon its affairs. Then it became a society of brigands. Wealthy people were kidnapped and if the ransom asked for was not paid the victim was killed.

Many wealthy people saw the desirability of continuing in the Mafia, particularly those of evil inclinations. It afforded protection to their estates and cattle and gave them the means of wreaking vengeance upon personal enemies. The high Mafia orders and the low Mafia executes. The poor join because of envy and want. The honest peasant is insulted, half fed and given the poorest work by the head man of an estate who usually belongs to the order. But if this peasant commits a small crime he is suddenly respected and feared. No one insults him; he is given good work and finds himself elevated financially and socially. No one dares ill-treat him, for he has the vast power of the Mafia at his back.

Its Worst Evil.
One of the worst evils of the Mafia system is the opportunity it offers for private murder. A man who wishes to put an enemy out of the way appeals to the local chief and upon payment of a sum varying from 50 to 500 francs the matter is taken in hand.

The common method of procedure in a case of this kind is this. The chief tries the victim, who of course, is absent and is found guilty of the offense. Lots are drawn for the executioner or the matter is placed in the hands of a novice to try his

courage and obedience. He is attended by a score or more of the band. When the victim comes along a shotgun is passed into his hands. He kills the man, passes the gun back to the man who gave it and in turn it is swiftly passed into a dozen other hands finally fading away as if by enchantment. The murderer has by this time disappeared through the streets but soon reappears running towards the scene of the murder like the other spectators.

The Mafia's Weapon.

The weapon invariably used in these assassinations is a shotgun the barrels of which have been sawed off.



LA MAFIA'S FAVORITE WEAPON.

within six inches of the hammers. The stock has also been sawed off so that the weapon can be as easily concealed as a large pistol. This style of firearm is used because the assassin always shoots at short range. Such a weapon was found by the police of Brooklyn on the scene of an Italian shooting on May 15, 1893.

One Italian writer who took a comparatively mild view of the secret societies of Southern Italy, speaks of La Mafia as "La Frantellanza." He says "La Frantellanza, neither wishes to rob for greed, nor rise against property, nor attack the form of government. To bathe in the blood of an enemy or insurer, with avidity, savagely, undisturbed—this was its ideal. Its maxim was 'sweet is wine, but sweeter still the blood of Christians.'"

Of the Mafia the great Algoni sounds an alarm when he says: "Once the first nucleus of the brotherhood is constituted, it spreads rapidly, recruiting adherents among the criminals and evil lives of every kind. This force of expansion given the anthropological and historical circumstances of Sicily is frightful."

GRANTLAND GRIEVE.

LEARNING TO SWIM AT 78.

An Old Philadelphia Gentleman Proves to Be a Very Apt Pupil.

"Science and proper exercise are conducive to extreme longevity and healthfulness," said Superintendent Payne, of the Natatorium. "While I am a very young man myself, I can remember not many years ago when a man was considered very old at the age of 60 years. Thanks to science and a proper regard for healthy exercise, a man is not considered in his prime now until he has reached the age of 70 or 75 years."

Take our swimming class, for example. Come in here any afternoon and I can show you something that will bolster up my assertion. We have one pupil in the afternoon class who is over 72 years old. He started to take swimming lessons about two weeks ago, and picked it up as quickly as a youngster of 16. There is not one of our pupils who enjoys himself as much as the old gentleman, who is as hearty and healthy as a youth of 35. This gentleman told me that he was inclined to be sickly about four years ago until he took up a proper exercise, and now he bids fair to live to be over 100.

"But if this old gentleman lives to reach the century mark, how long will some of the youngsters live who come here? We have a sturdy lot of giants, who tumble about in the big tank every day, who range in age from 4 to 6 years. They can all swim like fish."

Philadelphia Record.

THE MOUND BUILDERS.

RELICS IN AN OLD GRAVE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

The Snake Dance of These Ancient People—Elephants at One Time—Indigenous to This Country—Speculations Concerning a Prehistoric Race.

BY DR. HARVEY B. BASHORE.

Every school boy has heard of the Mound Builders and has perhaps seen some of their many mounds which are scattered all over the country.

He imagines them a mysterious race who lived long ago in this land and then disappeared, leaving no record to tell who they were, whence they came or whether they went. But they did leave a record in the wonderful earth-works they made; not only embankments miles long, inclosing circles and squares of a hundred acres, but there are burial mounds almost without number.

They made too many "effigy" mounds in the shape of beasts and birds; the best example of these is the great serpent mound of Ohio, which is about the queerest relic of its kind in the whole world. It represents a huge snake six feet thick and over a thousand feet long, lying on a bluff which faces a small creek. The outlines of the snake are very plainly seen; between the open jaws is an oval embankment one hundred and fifty feet long, and in the center of the oval are the remains of an ancient fireplace. The careful details of the work show that it was made for an object. But what could that object be?

Perhaps you may have heard of the snake dance, which is about the strangest thing ever seen, is part of the religious ceremony which this people still cling to, and it is very likely that the snake mound had a part to play in the religion of those who made it.

Probably the people came here from time to time from all the country round and worshipped their gods; perhaps, when some of their great men died they were buried here in the sacred grove; a sort of Westminster Abbey for the old chiefs. So much we now know about this singular relic.

Of course you would like to know how old the mound is. If you cut into any virgin soil which has never been disturbed, you will find above the clay or rock bed, a dark layer of soil formed from the decomposing vegetation—humus, they call it. Now geologists suppose about three inches of this to be formed in a century, and over the old serpent mound in some places this humus is two feet thick; so at this rate it would have been just about eight centuries ago that those weary, plodding people carried their baskets of earth to build the shrine; just about the time when Peter, the Hermit, was leading his children band to the death of the First Crusade and William of Normandy was fighting the great battle of Hastings.

Another of these effigies is the Elephant mound of Wisconsin, so called because it bears the form of that animal. But is this not strange? What did people who lived in North America know about elephants? To be sure geologists have told us that such animals once roamed over our land, but we used to think that the last one died before the first man came.

There is no doubt in any one's mind that the men who built the Elephant mound either saw or had descriptions of such an animal, and we are beginning to believe that these huge animals lived here much later than was formerly supposed.

Not long since in Missouri, while taking out the bones of one of these monster animals, a scientist, who was

standing by, jumped into the excavation and picked out a flint arrow point. This small piece of stone told him, as plainly as printed pages, that men did live with the old elephants. So by looking into several of these mounds we have learned a little about the builders—when they lived and how they worshipped. But we want to know more of their home life.

I have a map of the United States, which shows each mound or series by a red dot, and the red dots are so numerous that they almost cover the map. If you will keep in mind that each dot represents not one burial, but many, perhaps a hundred or more, you can easily see that the mound builders have left a great cemetery; and it is by exploring these graves that we have learned something about their customs.

Not many boys ever get a chance to see the opening of an old grave, so I will tell you of one I opened in Pennsylvania. This mound, by the way, is the subject of a very singular story. It is called the "Grasshopper" mound and the story is that the children of the Indian tribes, who lived here very long ago, got to quarrelling about a grasshopper; their mothers took up the quarrel and then their fathers; before long a fearful battle was going on and the survivors buried all the dead in one mound.

I hardly need tell you that we found bones and plenty of them. There may have been eighty or a hundred buried in this small mound. In the center there was a stone grave made of rough slabs of stones. This grave held one body, perhaps he had been a great chief in his day, for he seemed to have much care taken of his burial. The bones were similar to those of Indians, we found a few small pieces of pottery and a polished stone celt, but as we did not find the grasshopper we could not tell whether the mound had any connection with the legend, most likely it did not.

I have asked you to witness the opening of this mound for although it is popularly known as an "Indian" mound, it is in no wise different from the so-called Mound Builders' graves. Many, very many of these mounds have been explored by scientists and they are all about the same. They all contain one or more bodies and sometimes stone graves; some relics are found but they do not differ in the least from those which you pick up on any old Indian village site—pieces of pottery, arrow points, stone hatchets and now and then a piece of copper.

The great earthen circles and squares were probably made by the same people who are buried in the neighboring mounds. What was their purpose is yet a doubt. Most probably they were used as means of defense by enclosing villages; or perhaps they surrounded cultivated fields.

Some of the mounds, too, were apparently used for the dwelling of the chief or ruler of the village. A certain old Spaniard, with an unpronounceable name, who accompanied De Soto in his wild march, tells how they were entertained by a chief who had a dwelling on the top of one of these mounds, moreover, too, the Indians told him that it was their custom to build mounds for such purposes.

We must not always think of the Indians as living in tents of skins and being only hunters of wild beasts, more often they lived in wooden huts and cultivated the soil.

In brief, scientists do not now believe that the mound builders were a separate race, but conclude that they were the same as the Indians—the ancestors of the present race. They had the same kind of weapons, the same tools and the same ornaments; they built mounds for religious rites, for burial and for other unknown purposes, but with changing customs,

mound building became less frequent and about 200 years ago it passed away as a forgotten art.

Whence came this race perhaps we can never know, they do know that they lived in this land for almost a thousand years—so long that they have forgotten many of the rites of their ancestors; and we know that they above all, have the right to say "we are Americans."

ORCHIDS IN THE TROPICS.

The Study of This Beautiful Plant Always Interests Naturalists.

To the naturalist in the tropics a collection of orchids is a never ending source of interest. He cannot help feeling that they have faculties not generally credited to members of the vegetable kingdom. He sees them rejoicing in congenial positions and shrinking before a strong wind or the burning rays of a tropical sun. When the block to which they adhere becomes decayed, they show their taste in an unmistakable manner by throwing out new aerial roots, which feel their way to some better anchorage.

If a drought comes and no water is given, the leaves fall, and they lie dormant for months, to awake and put forth their wonderful flowers when the rain falls. When they can no longer exist under the most trying circumstances, they die very slowly, often lingering on for years without the sign of a flower. Even when the bud is in an advanced stage a change of place will often cause it to wither before opening.—Longman's Magazine.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD IN KILLARNEY.

The precocity of Young America is nothing compared to Young Ireland. He was about as high as the seat of a chair, as broad as he was long, and was simply stuffed into his first pair of breeches. He had high heels on a stiff pair of boots and made considerable noise as he strutted up and down the railroad station in Killarney one fine day lately. He was just 4 years old, and was putting away vigorously at a cigarette, a package of which he had secured by putting his last big penny in the slot.

All of a sudden, his light went out and, cap in hand, he stalks to a man among the waiting passengers—with a "Please, sir, at me a match." He refused, but others did not, and he got the matches he wanted to light the cigarette going till it was burned down, and when the youngster came near said:

"Who taught you to smoke?" "Off came the bit of a cap. 'The smokers, ma'am, up to the barracks.' 'Where is your mother?' was asked."

"She's gone away to Limerick, and I stole out."

"Well, don't you know that good little boys never smoke, and besides that is going to make you awfully sick in a minute!" said the lady mixing up morals and hygiene of the situation, as she noticed something of a change coming over the chubby face of the youngster.

But the expression turned into the very broadest of grins as this blame young man of four tender years turned on his heel and, in the most patronizing tones, said:

"Well, that's very good speak of you." And the lady did not seem inclined to continue the conversation either.—From a foreign letter in Washington Star.

Sisters, if your little ones should stick a nail in their feet, see that the wound bleeds freely, bathe with turpentine and make a good smoke, using woolen rags, and holding the wound over it until the pain ceases. Several of our children have been relieved by this remedy when suffering intense pain.

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